

Strengthening Families Across The World

# ABOVE RUBIES

[www.aboverubies.org](http://www.aboverubies.org)

Issue: Eighty-Three

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# From Our Home to Yours

We have just enjoyed a glorious Thanksgiving weekend with all our family. I agree with Mercy when she wrote in her Facebook, "I wish you all could have been here to experience the Campbell's Thanksgiving. I had the most amazing day. I LOVE it when we are all together as a family. I am so grateful for my family. I love them all so much." We feasted on turkey, chicken, venison and lamb and all the trimmings, not only on the day, but for the next few days. Evangeline's marinated venison (marinated all night in coconut milk) melted in your mouth. My son, Stephen and I cooked two pieces of lamb each, which also melted in your mouth. Because we are originally from the sheep country of New Zealand we can't have a celebration without cooking lamb!

After Thanksgiving Dinner at noon we ventured outside for activities with the children. We were blessed with a beautiful, warm, sunny day this year, although the children wouldn't let us change our plans even if it was raining or snowing! We have gradually gathered yearly traditions. The tug of war between the adults and the children is the favorite! It is fierce competition and as the children grow bigger and stronger it is a challenge for the adults to win! Everyone loves the egg-throwing competition where we break about three dozen eggs! This is followed by running races, sack races, three-legged races and piggy-back races for the different age groups. As it gets colder, we come in for dessert (we are too full to eat it at lunchtime) and the children entertain us with poems and stories.

The weekend before Thanksgiving I was blessed to attend the Bible Bee Convention. What an absolute joy to see children, 7-18 years, quoting Scripture. Children from families all over the nation begin memorizing Scriptures during the summer break. From their local groups, 300 children are chosen to participate in the National Bible Bee Conference. The elementary children have to learn 300 Scriptures, the Junior section 700 Scriptures and the Seniors 1100 Scriptures. They don't know which

Scriptures they will be asked to recite and therefore have to know them all perfectly. It was amazing to watch them quote the Word of God without hesitation.

Some children didn't make it to the semi-finals or the finals, but the wonderful thing about the Bible Bee is that every child wins! Even if they do not win a physical prize, they win the greatest blessing of hiding hundreds of Scriptures in their hearts which will mold their characters and be with them for the rest of their lives. The Scriptures I memorized as a child and teen are still with me today.

I chatted with one mother after the event and commented on how well her son recited the Scriptures (he came 4th in the finals). She replied, "Do you know that my son cannot utter one sentence without stuttering? And yet when he recites the Scriptures he speaks perfectly!" What a beautiful testimony. If you are interested in checking out the Bible Bee for next year, go to [www.biblebee.org](http://www.biblebee.org).

After seeing these children, with their open and shining faces, delighting in the Word of God, I have to ask myself some questions. In fact, I have to ask all Christian families the following questions.

How can it be that parents living in USA, who love God and confess they believe the Bible, send their children into the public education system that does not believe the Bible? How can parents who believe in prayer, send their children into schools where they are not allowed to pray? How can God-fearing parents who love to speak about Jesus send their children into schools where, by law, they are not allowed to confess that Jesus is Lord? Why do they send them to be educated by the ungodly who scorn the existence of God and the truth of biblical family? Why



Enjoying the good old family stories. (Nancy and Colin and son, Stephen).



Some of our family-Rocklyn, Pearl, Serene, Mercy, Stephen and Evangeline.



One of the boy' sack races.



Guess who's winning this round?

do they want them to be daily brain-washed in humanism and socialism? Why do they want their children to receive an opposite message to what they receive at home? I find this very hard to process in my brain! Surely it is the most logical thing to want our children's education to affirm what we believe.

Perhaps it is because we are like sheep (just as the Bible says) and we follow along with what everyone else is doing. We do not stop to think of the outcome. We want to assimilate into society rather than change society. Now, there's the rub! If we



*Broken egg! Colin is out of the competition!*

*Can Stephen catch it?*



*Two-year-old Saber Truth Johnson portraits. Saber is the 10th child of Howard and Evangeline.*



*I'm intelligent!*

have any desire at all for our nation to turn back to God, we had better do some quick thinking. Ninety percent of Christian children are being educated by the devil's agenda and he is having a hey-day. The humanists and socialists are educating the next generation and stealing the minds of children from godly homes.

Of course, we constantly hear the excuse that we send our children into the public system to be a witness. But if they outspokenly witness for Jesus, they won't be in the school for very long. If they pray out loud, they will be out! Instead of influencing their peers, they are weakened in their faith and often overtly receive pressure to give up their Christian faith.

A friend of mine recently applied for a job at a well-known pre-school chain. The person showing her around inadvertently mentioned "God." Immediately there was a loud chorus from all the children, "You can't say that name here!" This was a class of four year olds! My friend was told that she would not be able to talk

about Jesus and would not be allowed to mention Christmas, but she would be expected to teach about Ramadan and other non-Christian holidays. My friend did not accept the position because she could not compromise her commitment to Christ. However, her experience reveals what is happening, not just in our schools and colleges, but in our kindergartens! If a God-fearing mother wants her children to grow up believing in God, why would she send her children to a place where they are not even allowed to mention the name of God?

May God help us to get out of our rut of assimilation and begin to fearlessly proclaim the truth. We should not only demonstrate the gospel visibly, but declare the gospel verbally.

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 Founder and Editress  
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*I'm a cowboy!*



*I hate carrots!*



*I can sleep anywhere!*

## Cover Illustration



A chalk drawing by Arleen Green, taken from a photograph of Julie Krantz and her dear son, Caleb (11 years at the time) who went to be with the Lord December 15th 2009. They were in a beautiful garden in this picture. Julie wonders what kind of beautiful garden he is enjoying now.

### ABOVE RUBIES

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Above Rubies is a magazine to encourage women in their high calling as wives, mothers and homemakers. Its purpose is to uphold and strengthen family life and to raise the standard of God's truth in the nation. The name has been chosen from Proverbs 31:10 AMP, "A capable, intelligent and virtuous woman, who is he who can find her? She is far more precious than jewels and her value is far ABOVE RUBIES or pearls."

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 PRINTING: Lithographics, Nashville, TN USA  
 FRONT COVER: A chalk drawing by Arleen Green



I'm a

# Rock Star!

"Mommy! I need help with this math problem!" calls the ten year old.

"Mommy! Will you read me this book?" asks the four year old.

"Mommy! I need to go potty! Can you take me?" asks the two year old.

"Mommy!" cries the one year old as she holds up her hands for Mommy to hold her.

And the baby cries, needing Mommy to feed him again. Or change his diaper. Or just hold him. Either way, he wants Mommy!

Yes, I am a rock star in this house. Everybody wants a piece of Mommy. I am the Teacher, Book Reader, Potty Taker, Rescuer, Feeder, Comforter, Kisser of Boobos and Changer of Diapers. I keep these little people going. I keep them alive, healthy, happy, and whole. Wow! No wonder I am wanted all the time around here! I'm absolutely essential to each of their lives.

Sometimes this can get a bit overwhelming. At times I want to lock the door to my bedroom, prop my feet up and take a nap or read a good book. How wonderful that sounds. But I realize that would only be wonderful for a little while, because I wouldn't be in my element. God has placed me in our home and given me a very important task. There's no time for propping my feet up! No time for rest! These children need food, clothing and

teaching. They need someone to read to them, to inspire them to greatness, to point them to God, to love them selflessly and raise them valiantly. God says that person is me. I cannot pass this task off to someone else. I am their one and only Mommy. I have more influence over their lives than any other person in the world.

I love being the only one who can give my baby the nutrients he needs when he needs them. I love being the one who can calm my little Rosie when she is sad or lonely. I love that my children bring me books all day long and want me to read to them. There was a time when I had to work and put my oldest in daycare all day long. We were both miserable. Someone else read to her, kissed her boobos, potty trained and fed her. I was out of place at my job and she was out of place in that overcrowded daycare. Being at home is much more fulfilling than any job I could have outside the home.

I love the paraphrase of Proverbs 31 from the Message Bible: "First thing in the morning, she dresses for work, rolls up her sleeves, ready to get started. She senses the worth of her work, is in no hurry to call it quits for the day." This sounds like a woman who realizes her importance. She is a rock star! She is a heroine to her children. Her job is vital and necessary.

What she does is anything but drudgery. She is everything to her family.

She realizes the importance of staying in God's Word so she can lead her children to its wisdom and of keeping in step with the Holy Spirit so that from her life will come forth love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self control. She doesn't shrink from the challenge, but rises to it each day in the power of God.

I hear mothers say, "I don't think I could homeschool. It's too much work. I need my time." I wonder, your time to do what? What is more important than teaching and training your children? I don't believe there is anything more important we could be doing. Everything else can wait. God has given us a short time to influence the next generation. Will we waste it watching TV? Propping our feet up? Or will we be faithful to fulfill the task?

One thing that helped me get perspective recently was making a list of the things I want our children to do, see, experience, and learn before they graduate from "Rodgers University" and leave our home. I realize what a huge task lies before my husband and me! We better get to work! Most of the things I listed don't even have anything to do with knowing math facts or parts of speech, although those things are important. Most of them are training in life skills and life experiences. How rich our lives are! How wonderful to have the opportunity to pour into our children each

*continued on page 10*

I have been birthing and raising babies since 1985. My first baby, a 6 lbs. 5 oz boy, was born when I was only 19 years old—four hours after my first contraction. Joy—absolute and satisfying! I had worried a lot about labor during the pregnancy but all fears were wiped away when my naked baby was placed on my abdomen. At that moment I loved motherhood with a passion and I knew that motherhood was God’s mission for me. They gave me a “routine” episiotomy which made healing longer and more difficult than it should have been, but nothing could take away the excitement of a soft, dark haired baby in my arms.

## No Episiotomy this Time!

At 22 years old I was very excited to be expecting again! This time, when the ugly face of fear crept upon me, I fought back with a vengeance. I prepared myself with Scriptures and daily prayer. I was ready! I even thought I would feel very little pain if I completely focused on God. I went into labor at 12:15 a.m. I was in prayer and felt very much in control. My husband and I arrived at the hospital around 1:30 a.m. and the nurse said it would be a while. She walked out and turned the lights off so we could rest. Ten minutes later I had one long, very painful contraction. So much for thinking I would feel very little pain!

I told my husband to get the nurse, but when he couldn’t find her, I told him to yell for her because this baby was coming! I was in the room by myself with fear, prayer, pain and whispering the name of Jesus. Soon the nurse arrived, and telling me not to push, even though the baby’s head was ready to be born. I had to wait for the doctor. At 2:15 my little girl was born—two hours of labor from start to finish. I felt like superwoman. I was again on top of the world. My labor, delivery, and recovery were amazing. This time I didn’t have an episiotomy and that made such a difference.

My third pregnancy occurred when I was 25 years. I experienced a lot of back pain during this pregnancy and didn’t know why until my baby boy was born posterior. I pushed for 20 minutes and thought I was going to die! Absolutely nothing was happening. I grabbed my husband’s arm and said, “PRAY NOW!” He

# It’s kept me Young!

## *Pregnancies in my Teens, Twenties, Thirties and Forties!*

prayed and my 7 lbs. baby was born facing the ceiling. Still my labor was only five hours long. I bounced back just fine and I now had three small children to care for.

I found out I was expecting again when my baby was a year old. Sadly, this pregnancy ended when I was about eight weeks along. I delivered a perfectly formed sac full of amniotic fluid surrounding a little baby about the size of a lima bean. My mother and I cried together over our loss, as she was with me at the time. My heart was very sad and I longed for another baby to hold and nurse. I was delighted to become pregnant again at the age of 28. I had prayed for another baby and God heard my cry.

## Heading for Home Births!

With this pregnancy I suffered extreme morning sickness for 13 weeks. I couldn’t get off the couch and was so sleepy I could hardly stay awake. I finally started feeling better and with renewed strength began to enjoy my pregnancy. This time around we found a midwife whom I have grown to love over the past 18 years. She taught me a lot about home remedies and what was going on with my baby during each stage of my pregnancy. For the first time, I could ask questions about my baby and my body for which I previously had longed for answers. I felt more connected to my baby during this pregnancy. It was almost like a first pregnancy as we headed for a home birth and again the unknown.

When my labor started shortly after midnight I expected to have a baby in a couple of hours, four at the most. God had other plans. I did not deliver this little baby girl until 12 hours later. Again, I was swept by fear and worried that something must be wrong to have such a long labor. I grabbed my husband’s arm and again told him to, “PRAY NOW!” He did, and after not too much longer she was born. She was by far my hardest labor and delivery although she was only 6lb. 5oz. She just

didn’t want to come. She had a crooked little nose that later straightened out. I guess she was positioned a little oddly and that is what took so long. We were sold on home birth and I had my best recovery ever. I was full of energy and my husband had to tell me to take it easy. That was my last pregnancy in my twenties.

At the age of 30 my fifth pregnancy occurred. This pregnancy was a complete surprise to us as we were actually trying to prevent pregnancy at this time. Our family had been in a terrible car wreck and I needed extensive dental work. We felt it would be better if we didn’t get pregnant for a while. Even though I had been through so much due to the accident, God had better plans and a positive pregnancy test proved it. I again became very sick and it was 15 weeks before I started feeling better. After my morning sickness was over I was amazed at how my pregnancy flew by with ease.

## Still Battling Fear!

After all the faithfulness God showed me during every birth I was still full of fear. I wrote out Scriptures and prayed and meditated daily. I prepared as much as I knew how but felt angry with myself for being so faithless. When I finally went into labor, it lasted only two hours and my very tiny 5lbs. 2oz. baby girl was born, almost without the midwife. I remember writing in my journal to God, “Your name is Faithful.” I want my children to have a record of all that God has done so that their faith will be built as mine has over the years. I had to put off some dental work but it was all worth it in the end.

At the age of 32 I was pregnant again, and once more, I was sick and sleepy for 16 weeks. I felt horrible and with five children and homeschooling there wasn’t much time for resting. All of my pregnancies lasted about 38 weeks but this pregnancy was very different. My two week early due date came and went. My 40 week



due date came and went, and those fears again. This time I wasn't afraid of labor, but I was afraid my baby might die. One day I cried out to God about all of my fears and He gave me the peace I needed. The next day I went into labor. Two and a half hours and my 7lbs. 8oz baby girl was born. Six children and my body bounced back as well as with my first pregnancy.

I was 35 for my seventh pregnancy—the “scary age” the doctors predict. Extreme nausea for 16 weeks again and then a perfect pregnancy, except for one morning I woke up and I couldn't see very well. It was the strangest thing. I immediately called my midwife and she told me to eat protein and see what happens. I ate some eggs and cheese and later that afternoon I was totally fine.

## On our Own!

I went into labor at about 10:30 and my labor progressed very quickly. I called my midwife and as we were praying I felt my baby move down the birth canal. She told me not to move and was on her way. I made it to my upstairs bedroom, lay down and felt the urge to push. My husband was on the phone with the midwife until the electricity went out and we lost all contact. I knew this baby was coming and there was no stopping him. With my next con-

traction my water broke and with one push our 8 lbs. 4 oz. little guy was born into the arms of his daddy. Another birth completed in less than two hours.

I became pregnant with my eighth child when I was 37 years but I didn't feel any older at all. After my 16 weeks of morning sickness my pregnancy was again without complications. I read my Scriptures and meditated on them as I had done with all of my pregnancies. One hot summer evening I went into labor and my body had one very long contraction. I could feel my body working just as God created it to do. I wasn't scared this time. It was intense and short. I labored for the first time standing up, a much better position. Our little 7 lbs. girl was born into her daddy's arms in an hour and a half.

At the age of 39 we welcomed our 9th pregnancy. This time I was sick for about 20 weeks! This was very hard for me with a large family, but now I had lots of older children to help, which took the load off of my shoulders. All my babies came early (except for one) and I had decided that February 14th would be the perfect day for a baby to arrive. Instead, God planned February 9th for our ninth child. I was 15 days away from my 40th birthday. Another quick and easy delivery took place without the midwife (she arrived a little later!) A baby girl, 6lbs. 7oz,

came to bless our lives.

I became pregnant again when I was 42 years. Sadly, that pregnancy ended in a miscarriage. Another pregnancy at 43 years and 20 more weeks of morning sickness. I was happy to be sick this time as it was a good symptom that everything was going well in the pregnancy. My midwife had retired and I was without prenatal care for the first five months but God helped us to find another wonderful midwife. My sweet baby boy arrived an hour and fifteen minutes after my first contraction. He was still in the bag of water when he was born and my husband had to use scissors to cut open the sac—the midwife missed the birth again!

## Tears and Smiles Together!

My last baby is now 21 months old and he has been the most wonderful blessing to our family. When he was three weeks old, our family suffered the loss of our oldest son who had just turned 24. It was a great tragedy for us and my tiny infant son was a healing balm for our hearts. We had no choice but to smile in the midst of heartache. Tears and smiles all ran into one as we smiled at our baby and cried over our loss. I nursed my little boy, cuddled him, smelled his soft newborn head and it gave me great comfort.

I can't explain miscarriage, still-born babies, or the death of a child at any age, but I can explain how I trust in the Author of Life. In Him alone I trust. He is ever present in every situation. I feel Him and I know He is always with me to carry me through.

I recently lost a baby at eight weeks pregnant. My children were sad as they pray for another baby. If God sees fit to give us another child, I will be thrilled. If He doesn't I will learn to be content.

In 2007 we welcomed three children from Africa into our home. They were birthed in my heart and I labored over them all. They have been with us for four years and are doing well. It is a very long process to adopt, but we endured and we have beautiful children in our home.

## Easier as I get Older!

I had one baby in my teens, three in my twenties, five in my thirties, and one in my forties. I can honestly say that I have noticed very little difference in the way that I carry my pregnancies. My labors are easier as I get older and that old enemy named "fear" has become less and less formidable. I feel healthy. I don't have to use the bathroom when I sneeze. I don't feel like my insides are falling out. I actually feel great. I think having babies keeps a person young. A lot of the people I went to school with have grandchildren that are the age of my baby. I have been married for nearly 28 years and have been pregnant 90 months and nursed at least 180 months. I love it. I absolutely love being an older mom. I laugh and hug a little person so many times a day that I can't count them all.

One last thought: fertility only lasts for a season and that season is over much quicker than you think.

### JULIE KRANTZ

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*Paul and Julie Krantz with their children, Rachel (22), Jordan (20), \*Deborah (19), Moriah (17), Abigail (15), \*Sophia (14), Naomi (13), Nathan (10), \*Silas (9), Julianna (8), Lillian (5) and Christian Shepherd (21 months). \*Adopted from Liberia, West Africa.*

# God Messed with our Plans



I grew up in a "typical" agnostic Western family. My parents worked hard and loved us as best they knew how. However, with no spiritual direction or protection I went head first into godlessness from a very early age, seeking something or someone to satisfy the longings of my heart. I was fooling around with boys by seven, smoking by 11, drugs by 13, dealing drugs by 15 and an escort at 17. By 21 the glamour of the "sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll lifestyle" faded to reveal the desperation, depravity and destruction underneath it all. No matter how high I got, I couldn't fill the aching hunger in my heart.

That spring, I broke out in painful boils all over my body. The doctors were stumped. After many weeks they continued getting worse. I poured out my heart to a friend from high school (who had since returned to a relationship with God). I admitted the truth of my life and then broke down, telling him about the boils that wouldn't go away. He prayed for my healing over the phone, even though I

laughed at him for suggesting it. I listened politely, hardly daring to believe this Jesus was for real (and not in the Tooth Fairy/Santa Claus category I'd always assumed). Yet as he prayed, I realized that maybe the problem was more than skin deep. Maybe there was something wrong in my soul that no doctor could fix.

That night I prayed privately for the first time in my life saying, "God, if You're real, I need to know." Seven days later the boils were gone! I was in shock—Jesus Christ was REAL! A week later I heard the Easter story in a church and I suddenly KNEW with everything in me, that the Resurrection was a historical, factual event! I could hardly breathe as waves of revelation and understanding washed over me. The Resurrection changed everything, for everyone, everywhere, for all time! I got it! Everything changed from that point as I was fully forgiven, alive to God and the process of being transformed by the renewing of my mind began in earnest. Over the next few years

I was set free from drug addiction, restored to relationship with my parents, married my boyfriend (who also gave his heart and life to Jesus), went to Bible College and we began doing missions work together.

We conformed to the pattern in the world and church by preventing conception until we were “ready” to have children. After a daughter and then twin boys, two key events transpired that messed with our plans. An elderly believer gave me some copies of the *Above Rubies* magazine. I was transfixed by the names and photos of the families who submitted articles; there was something about them that pierced my heart.

The second event was a series of encounters with other believers pointedly asking us if we were “done” now. To our surprise, rather than being relieved by the prospect, we were disturbed! Late one night, when the twins were five months old, I dared to ask my husband, “What if we didn’t stop?” We had a talk that night and God graciously exposed the things long hidden in our hearts and minds. He was about to change our lives forever.

We loved the Lord and had gladly given up much to serve Him, yet, when

push came to shove, the songs we sang on Sundays did not match our actions when it came to bearing children. The bottom line was that we were afraid. As we confessed our worst fears out loud, they suddenly shrunk next to our knowledge of God’s character. We realized we’d never truly searched the matter out for ourselves. No one had ever talked to us about it; I’d never heard a sermon and never read a book or article until *Above Rubies*. Almost everyone we knew in the western church limited their family size in some way, shape or form. Families that didn’t were privately scorned, or at least looked upon as a “special” class of Christians under a “special” calling. We vaguely knew that publicly endorsed birth control was a recent practice, that up until my grandparent’s generation (The Depression), was universally shunned in the Church (not just by Catholics). So what happened? What were we doing and why? Was God really okay with preventing conception or were we in grave error and captive to faithless fears?

God in His exceeding grace invited us to trust Him more fully than we ever had before—to give Him our WHOLE hearts, our WHOLE bodies and our

WHOLE lives. We chose to turn from fear and walk by faith and welcome children, made in His image, for His purposes in this generation and those to come. This wasn’t about us anymore or what we thought we could handle or afford.

We thank God we chose to trust and obey, in spite of the controversy, opinions and fear our friends, family and church. Our two boys would not even exist had God not pursued our whole hearts and we responded with “Not my will, but yours be done.” This year we celebrated nine years of marriage, welcomed our fifth child, and have happily started home schooling. We trust God’s Word which declares that God is good and that children are blessings and rewards straight from Him! He is transforming us by renewing our minds so that we no longer conform to the pattern of the world. His ways are exceedingly and abundantly better than anything I could ever dream or imagine.

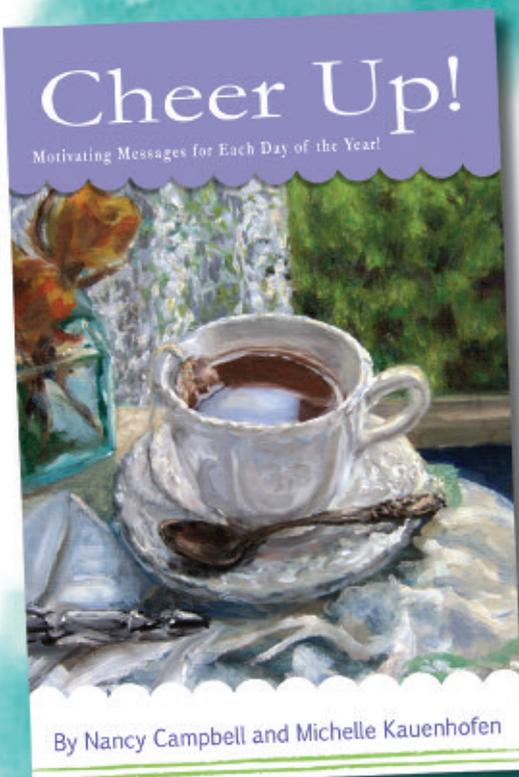
#### TARA HILLS

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*Gavin and Tara’s blessed gifts from God are*

*Eden (6), Jethro (4), Judah (4), Asher (3) and Boaz (10 months).*



## Cheer Up!

### Mini Motivating Messages for Every Day!

By Nancy Campbell and Michelle Kauenhofen

You will be re-charged each new day as you read a powerful message from Nancy and Michelle. You can grab them on the run as you start another adventurous day of living your divine calling of wife and mother.

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I once read the title on a movie poster that caught my attention. It said, *Girl, Interrupted*. I've never seen the film but the title struck me as very descriptive of many women today and of my own personal story.

Of all the things that can "interrupt" the emotional and spiritual development of a young woman, there's one that often goes unnoticed because of its indirect nature: the termination of your parent's marriage covenant. I am the daughter of divorced parents.

I vividly remember the day my father moved out of our home. My mother took my sisters and me to the county fair. My parent's plan was to have my father pack up and leave before we returned. Before we left, I found my dad and said, "Dad, I want to stay home with you." I normally would never pass up an opportunity to ride on "The Octopus" but sensed something was not right. My dad insisted that I go. I felt more determined to stay and moved closer to him. He looked really distressed and backed away so I couldn't touch him. Suddenly, it felt like something was unraveling within me and a bizarre sense of confusion stepped in between us. No more was said and I was off to the fair to have a good time—feeling sad, rejected and confused.

When we returned home that afternoon, my mom dropped the bomb. "Your father and I are getting a divorce." My heart sank, and felt numb. My twelve year old sensibilities were unable to process this unfolding tragedy. Even though it was essentially the death of our family, no one cried. I just remember feeling a great sadness descend on my heart and seeking solitude to relieve the pain.

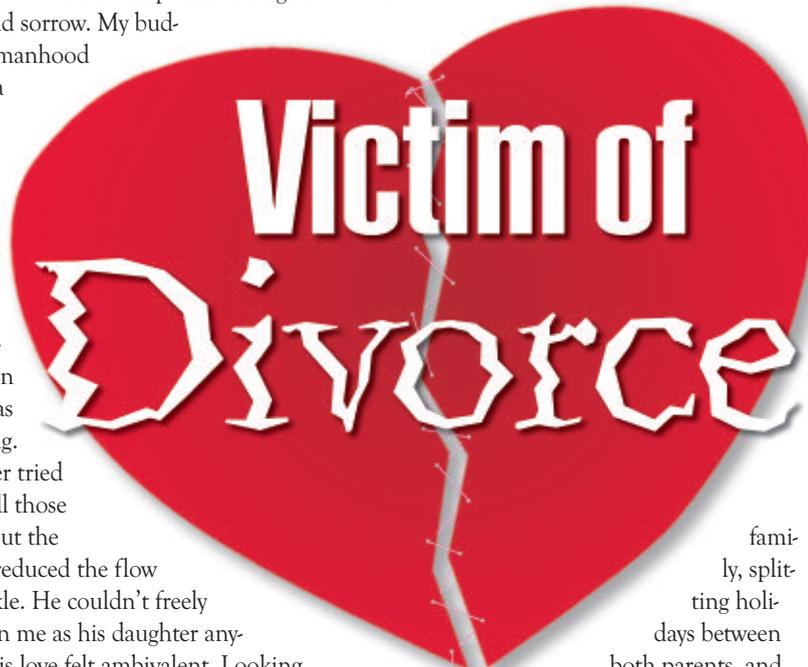
Our family seemed nearly idyllic. Perhaps that's why I felt the loss so profoundly. Neither of my parents thought this would happen to them, but the enemy was cunning. Choices were made and the damage was done. It was not in vogue to seek counseling for a troubled marriage in the 1970's, let alone speak of it. Divorce seemed the only solution for betrayed trust and broken hearts.

I'm sure my mom had her times of private tears, but she put on a brave face, determined to keep everything as normal as possible. "You'll still see your father," she assured us, "he just won't be living here anymore." Simple, right? I think

everyone hoped it would be. But, covenants can't be broken without consequences. In the case of divorce, the damage to the children is unavoidable and yet not immediately recognizable. My maturing process basically broke down. I was at an age when my father's influence should have been increasing in my life. Now it was relegated to "visits"—often uncomfortable ones because of unspoken feelings of regret and sorrow. My budding womanhood needed a father's consistent affection, protection and confidence in who I was becoming. My father tried to give all those things, but the divorce reduced the flow to a trickle. He couldn't freely delight in me as his daughter anymore. His love felt ambivalent. Looking back, I see that ambivalent love was at the heart of my emotional problems.

For years, I was unconscious of the emotional wound I carried. Confusion in relationships (particularly with men), battles with self-acceptance and a lingering sadness in my heart were the new normal. Thankfully, I had become a Christian in my early teens. Though this largely filled my love deficit, God waited until I reached adult age to begin the real healing. First, He had to expose the wound. During a college mission trip to Mexico City, I lived with a very poor and wonderful Mexican family. Being dependent on them for everything, we quickly bonded. When it came time to say goodbye, I was caught unaware. I found myself weeping uncontrollably. The warmth and closeness of this family exposed the brokenness of my own. I returned to the U.S. an emotional basket case. With a broken and needy heart, I sought counsel from godly mentors and professionals who all helped me identify my underlying need: to acknowledge the truth of the divorce's effects on me and to grieve my losses.

I began to ask my parents a lot of questions. This was not easy. It meant digging up painful memories. Yet, it was necessary to look at what happened with adult eyes. As I honestly faced the past, huge emotions surfaced, including anger. This scared me at first, but I learned not to deny what I was really feeling, no matter how ugly it was. Alienation from my father's



fami-  
ly, split-  
ting holi-  
days between  
both parents, and  
the pain of watching  
my mother date and break

up with several men were just some of the secondary consequences that made me really angry. After the anger subsided, tears began to flow. Each time I allowed myself to feel and put voice to these emotions, healing occurred deep in my soul. The maturing process rebooted and worked itself through my entire being. I even noticed changes in my physical body. I was unburdening my heart and maturing simultaneously, feeling lighter and more alive! As John 8:32 says, knowing the truth was setting me free. As for my parents, I think it was important for them to see my struggle and for me to gain perspective on theirs. By revisiting the past and gaining greater insight into what happened, I learned what I needed to forgive. This led to relationships with my parents that were far more meaningful.

I think I understand why God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). It pulls apart the very unit he has designed to shape and build our character and personality. And this affects the next generation, our com-

munities and nation. Destinies are at stake. I recently took part in a study on covenants. We looked at Malachi 2:15, "Has not the Lord made them one? And why one? Because He was seeking godly offspring." My notes explained, "This breaking of faith leaves the children's souls wandering in confusion, seeking an oneness that has been broken and lost." God detests divorce because broken families disrupt His ultimate goal: our oneness with Him.

Even though divorce is so prevalent and widely accepted, let us not forget the burden it has laid on the children. I often think of the effects divorce has had on our nations. So few have seen the sacrifice it takes to overcome relational hardships and we've cheapened the very institution God intended to bless us. We desperately need to be learning how to pass covenantal love on to the next generation. As for me, the effects of going through a parental divorce still haunt my journey on earth. If it wasn't for God in my life, the effects would have been much worse.

I've learned He can heal the unique wounds of a girl interrupted, but, what a long and twisting detour I've traveled.

**NAME WITHHELD**  
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## I'm a Rock Star!

*continued from page 4*

day! This is anything but dull!

You are a rock star to your children, too. Inspire them with your dedication and commitment. Give it all you've got. Trust God to provide the rest you need along the way as you carry out the visions He has given you for your family. There is no more important, fulfilling, satisfying task in the entire world.

**JULIE RODGERS**

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*Brian and Julie Rodgers and their blessings: Allie (10), Maggie (4), Penelope (2), Rosemary (1), and Samuel (4 months).*

# The Star of

Our faith was put to the test the day we received the news that our baby may have a severe chromosome disorder called Trisomy 18, which is described as "incompatible with life." The doctor also said our baby would not live past birth and suggested termination many times throughout the remainder of my pregnancy. They were very pushy with abortion options, but we always promptly said No! The doctors did not want to even go through the trouble of monitoring our baby in the womb, but we fought for monitoring because we valued our daughter's life even before she was born.

Daily I clung to the words in Philippians 4:4-7, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." I felt this peace daily as I committed my daughter to God. I prayed she would be just as God planned from the foundations of the earth. I know God does not make mistakes and He chose our family to walk this unknown road.

Hannah Grace was born in early December. The doctors told us she would have to be born with a c-section as her heart would not be able to handle a vaginal delivery and she would not be breathing! But, she was born vaginally and screaming! She only needed oxygen assistance for a couple hours. With her digestive system functioning completely, she was so much better than the doctors ever predicted!

Her only problem was that she was too small to nurse from the breast or suck from a bottle so she had a NG tube in her nose and breast milk was pumped into her tummy. She came home from the hospital after a week in the NICU—what a joyful day when we brought Hannah home into the loving arms of her seven siblings. Unconditional love radiated from our home! Hannah was the star of our home. She was hardly ever put down.

Each new day, the whole family was involved in showing love to our sweet Hannah. All the children made special receiving blankets for her which she used daily. The girls sewed skirts for Hannah and we are so thankful she was able to wear these special clothes! Five year old Nathan always wanted to hold Hannah when mommy took a shower. He sat on a cute little chair in front of the TV, proudly holding his little sister. Three year old Terri Lynn wanted to hold her too. She was always there when Hannah's diaper was changed and when Hannah took a bath.

Martin, 17 years old, was sure to hold and cuddle Hannah each day as he knew she'd be with us for a short time. Sam, 15 years old, showed such concern for Hannah in everything she faced as a special needs baby and was so proud to show her off at church and elsewhere. Hannah was severely hard of hearing and it was amazing to see her older brothers with Hannah in their arms, yelling at the top of their lungs, "Hannah can you hear us! We Love you so much." That is a treasured memory.

Cassie, 13 years old, was a back-up feeder. Whenever I drove a long distance and Hannah needed to be fed in the van, Cassie was my expert on the feeding pump. She also carefully changed Hannah's diaper and clothes. Heidi, 11 years old, proudly made Hannah a snow chair outside when we were blessed with snow one Sunday morning. She included Hannah in her play with babies and was so good to show Hannah off to friends and family! Valerie, eight years old, beamed whenever she held Hannah and loved playing babies with her, using all the doll furniture!

Rick, Hannah's daddy, loved sitting on his easy chair holding Hannah in his big arms and treasuring every moment with her. One day he lay on the ground exercising and right beside him laid Terri Lynn and Hannah exercising together. It was so cute! I loved every moment with Hannah. She slept with me nightly as she had to be fed every three hours around the clock. It took at least one hour to feed her which meant I'd get about two hours sleep at a time. I did not mind, anything to help

# Out Home

my precious baby!

We were so proud of our sweet Hannah and wanted to share her with others. Our family radiated love for the world's unlovable. Hannah radiated peace and that was a comfort to our family.

She began to struggle with breathing and turned blue many times a day. We took her to Children's Hospital where the staff worked extremely hard to save her, but her heart and lungs were not working properly together. Hannah passed away in our loving arms into the loving arms of Jesus after 64 glorious days with her family.

She changed our lives forever! We have no regrets as we did everything we could to give her quality life. We can proudly say God chose our family for this special person. She is forever in our hearts and one day we will get to see her again. What a glorious day that will be!

God had a huge plan when He gave us Hannah! I am so thankful we did not listen to our doctor's suggestions for termination! We would have missed out on all the love and peace Hannah shared with us, all the love we poured out on her and all the love shared by others. God gave me a precious treasure when He whispered in my ear a few months after we lost Hannah, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, what you did to the least of these (Hannah) you have done unto Me" (Matthew 25:21).

## SANDI KWANT

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*Rick and Sandi with their precious family—Martin (18), Sam (15), Cassie (13), Heidi (11), Valerie (8), Nathan (6), Terri Lynn (3) and sweet Hannah.*



## MEAT FOR MEN

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.....  
Colin Campbell no longer writes monthly emails  
but instead writes a daily post on Facebook for men.

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<http://bit.ly/MeatforMenBlog>  
(available from 1 January 2012).

# Healed from OCD and Depression!

My husband was out of the country visiting seminaries in the US, while I visited family. It had been a rough three months—a difficult birth of our first baby, further complications and a baby who barely slept. Our baby had been diagnosed with milk intolerance and was now doing much better—far less crying and much more sleeping. Happy days! But, not for long.

One day, everything changed as I experienced a sudden onset of postnatal OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) and depression. My husband was stuck at an airport due to bad weather and I could not think straight. Supportive family members got me home where my husband thankfully joined us. He took me straight to a doctor, who mis-diagnosed me and sent me to the inpatient psychiatric unit of the hospital. There, a specialist doctor re-diagnosed me and medicated me. That was the start of six frightening months of anxiety, doubt and sedation where I was often too scared to leave the house and my husband had to stop working to take care of our baby.

Things worsened when, due to stress, my husband's Meniere's disease came back with a vengeance. He would

often be so dizzy and sick that he could not stand up. I lost all control of my life. But that is what I needed—to relinquish that control to the God to whom I had given my life two years earlier.

After six months I was put in contact with a specialist in Cognitive behavior therapy and psychology, with a particular interest in the form of OCD from which I suffered. He was sympathetic and knowledgeable about my faith and this was integral to our sessions. Within six weeks he helped me to gain a completely new perspective and I emerged stronger, a strength now rooted in my Lord.

We could barely believe the healing that had taken place in such a short time. Within another six months my husband, our baby, and I boarded a plane heading for a new life in the USA in order for my husband to do a Master

of Divinity degree at Seminary. God was good to us. We stayed in the US for nearly four years—years full of fond memories, life long friends, fun experiences and the arrival of two more children.

During my time of suffering, I was sure I would not be able to have or cope with having any more children. Honestly, I thought my life had “ended.” The only times of peace were in prayer and meditation on Psalm 121. But God heals and restores and through intercessory prayer He listened and answered. I suffered no OCD or depression symptoms before or after the birth of my next two children and I am fully enjoying life.

## SHELLEY DOYLE

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*Shelley and Andy's blessings are Jessica (5),  
Sienna (3) and Jamie (1).*



# To Nurse Again!

On November 8, 2010, I arrived at our weekly choir rehearsal. My seven-month-old daughter, Lydia was still nursing at the time and I held her while we practiced. As I sang, a slight headache began developing in the back of my head, but I tried to ignore it. Later, I looked down at my daughter and noticed her face had become a blur. I realized quickly that I was no longer seeing clearly. Images appeared sunken and faces deformed. In a bit of a panic, I cleaned my glasses, hoping some smudge on the lens was the cause of these “blind spots.” Fear grew as I realized the problem was not with my glasses!

A medical doctor in our church evaluated me and referred me to the ER where a CT scan revealed spots on my brain. A subsequent MRI at a neurological center determined I had two cavernous malformations or brain tumors. However, they were not cancerous! One of these lesions had formed in the occipital lobe, which controls vision, and was swelling and bleeding. The additional pressure caused the “picture” that the brain translated for my eyes to become distorted. I was in the hospital for three days on a substantial dose of steroids to help control the bleeding and decrease the swelling.

Thoughts flooded my mind and heart. I have four daughters and Lydia, my baby, was nursing exclusively during that time. I had no milk stored and there was no time to plan. However, my sister and sister-in-law were lactating and I was thrilled to learn they had been nursing my little treasure while I was away. I was thankful, but wondered if I would ever nurse Lydia again.

The neurosurgeons recommended that I wean her due to my upcoming craniotomy to remove the tumor. In addition, the steroids I would be taking every day until then posed a slight risk to her. I am ashamed to write that I have always been frustrated with my body for the amount of milk I produce. With my first child, I was so engorged that she was unable to latch on. I have always struggled with discomfort from lumps and felt like a milk foun-

tain, as I leaked through pads and clothing. Friends would tell me not to take my milk for granted, but I did.

I began to wean Lydia by decreasing her feedings each day and trying to incorporate solid foods and formula. However, when I offered her a cup, she refused it. When I offered formula, she became fussy and refused. I called our pediatrician and a lactation consultant. Both assured me



that the type of steroid I was taking would not harm Lydia in any way. Still, I felt safer and had peace of mind as I chose to continue the process of weaning.

It was at that time that a new friend and fellow believer offered to pump bottles for me. Overwhelmed by her willingness, I accepted every ounce she gave me. Lydia drank bottled breast milk throughout the day and nursed in the evening.

I fully expected Lydia to become restless and irritable as she weaned. However, she began to comfort herself by holding the silk binding of her blanket near her face and sucking her thumb. This became her source of comfort and she would sweetly fall asleep in my arms, sucking her thumb. This was another simple, yet profound way God showed His great lovingkindness to me.

On January 3, 2011, three days before my surgery, I began taking a medication to prevent seizures during and after surgery. I

nursed Lydia for what I thought would be the last time. She was especially sweet and I was very anxious about the upcoming surgery due to all the risks. The risks ranged from damage to the language/vision centers of my brain, infection, paralysis, and even death.

The day of my surgery, the Lord wrapped His everlasting arms around me in a way I had never known before. I had a great fear of the unknown. However, as I entered the waiting area for pre-op procedures, a peace came over my mind, soul, and spirit. I found refuge under the mighty wings of God, just as Ruth did. It was not a feeling. It was a place of comfort and rest—a sweet place to be.

The surgery went wonderfully. The Lord steadied the hands of the surgeons and no mistakes were made. He gave the anesthesiologists the wisdom to give the necessary amount of paralytic to their patient. The Lord brought me out of

surgery smiling and rejoicing in Him and His goodness to me.

I was on strong pain medications, steroids, and anti-seizure drugs for the duration of my hospital stay. After three days, I was discharged and given prescriptions for three other medications to decrease swelling and bleeding and to prevent infection and seizures. I was to take the anti-seizure medication for three to six months after surgery. But, because I was healing naturally and quickly, one week after surgery, the neurosurgeons decided that the prescriptions I was taking were no longer necessary. They ended my dosages of medication one week later.

I had given up on the thought of ever nursing Lydia again. She was enjoying her bottled breast milk, yogurt, and baby food and had not been breastfed for over two weeks. I called a pharmacist to see if it was possible to nurse again. None of the professionals I asked expected Lydia to want to leave her cup to nurse, but they

informed me that after one more week or so, I could try.

I waited ten days to make sure there was no lingering chemicals in my system, and then offered myself to her. To my surprise and absolute elation, she immediately latched on and began to nurse. I was overjoyed. Every time I heard her swallow, I called out in my excitement, "She's eating!"

In the following weeks, I placed myself on a rigorous pumping schedule. It did not take long before my milk, which had almost completely dried up, was Lydia's primary source of sustenance. She wanted to nurse every two hours. Now, at a little over a year old, she nurses, eats table foods and homemade smoothies.

I often think of the words, "Salvation would have been enough, but God has given us so much more." It is true. To know Christ and be saved from the wrath of God and the condemnation of sin would have been enough, but God in His

mercy, allows us to cry out to Him in our times of distress. The veil has been torn, so we can enter boldly and make our requests known to Him.

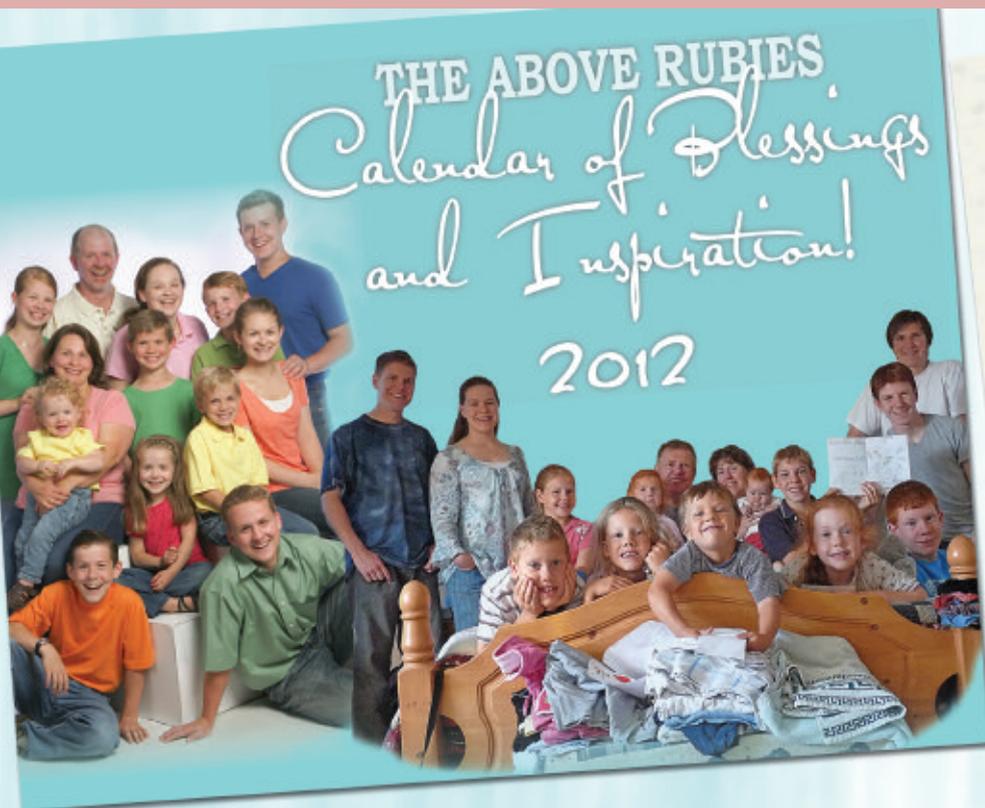
The Lord not only rescued me from death but He has given me abundant life. He brought me through the trial of brain tumors and surgery. He stooped to bring me comfort and peace throughout the entire ordeal. He surrounded me with family and a local body of Christ that cared for me. These things I asked for, but God is able to do exceedingly and abundantly beyond all I could ask or think (Ephesians 3:20). He allowed me to nurse my baby again—something I thought would be impossible and never thought to ask!

### CARISSA OSPINA

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Herman and Carissa's blessings are Olivia (7), Elena (6), Naomi (3), Lydia (1/2) and expecting a baby boy March 2012.



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# “A garden is a lovesome thing.”

“Assuredly, you want a garden. A home without a garden begins with a handicap. We need the company of friendly trees and embracing vines to coax our home into the open and make it part of the big outdoors. And surely we need the cheeriness of flowers. How we should miss the gay good morning of the daily rose that has clambered up the trellis to peep in at the window, or the more distant greeting of the hollyhocks as they peer through the lattice windows of the dining-room.

And then the joy each morning of going down a primrose path with the only man in the world, and bidding him good-bye for the day beneath the sheltering arms of a swaying elm. Oh, yes, indeed, every bride must have her garden.

It may be large or small. It matters not. It can surround a low, rambling dream-house, or it can be within the confines of a box fastened to some window ledge, far above the roar of city streets.

If it be green and preaches the gospel or color and sings in its psalm the gladness, and has been coaxed into existence by the loving care of its owner, then it will be a real garden, with its highlights and shadows, even if it be within the confines of four wooden sides, and it will ever exhale an atmosphere of contentment that is sweet and satisfying.”

*From The Hope Chest—a Book for the Bride and for the Wife who would Retain the Joy of Bridal Days  
by Lorene Bowman and Jane Leslie Kift.*

# ORDER



## IN THE HOME

Did you know that you are the director of your home? No, I didn't say you are to direct your husband! God has given you the task of administrating the domestic affairs of your home. In 1 Timothy 5:14 it tells women to "guide the house." The translation of this phrase from the Greek literally means "to rule and manage the home." This is your privilege and responsibility and it is as important as managing a big business. A business can't run well without order, nor can a home. Here are a few of my thoughts about order.



### ORGANIZE

One of my favorite sayings is, "Things don't just happen; you have to make them happen." We cannot make our home run efficiently unless we organize. This will look different in every home. Some women are high-powered organizers; others are laid back. Whatever our personality, we must maintain a certain amount of organization. The blatant fact is that if you just let life happen, chaos eventuates!

You must plan your meals, make sure supper is ready in time for your husband coming home each evening, organize your cleaning and laundry, and of course, train your children to do their specific tasks. To organize a home does not mean that you are a slave in the home. You are the organizer, making it happen by getting everyone involved.

### Do you have younger children? Do the basics!

Life has seasons. It is part of the ebb and flow of life. You may be in the season of little toddlers and babies, or maybe you

have a newborn. In this season, it is not as easy to keep the standard you would normally keep. Keep to the basics in this season. Make sure you provide three nutritious meals each day. Ask the Lord to give you ideas on how to do this as you care for your little ones at the same time. You may like to use the crock pot for the supper meal, putting in meat and veggies that can cook all day. That way, you will get through the fussy time with your baby (which is usually in the early evening, right at the time you are seeking to prepare supper) and you'll be sure to have an evening meal ready for your husband.

Keep up with laundry and make sure dishes are done. Don't worry if your house gets strewn with toys and so on throughout the day, but don't leave it like that. Have a "One, Two, Three, Let's Go" clean up before your husband arrives home. Even little children can be excited about putting everything away (or even throwing it out of sight into a cupboard) before daddy comes home.

Don't try and do a lot of extra things. I remember when I was raising my little

*"Oh, cleaning and scrubbing will wait 'till tomorrow,  
But children grow up, as I've learned to my sorrow,  
So quiet down, cobwebs. Dust, go to sleep.  
I'm nursing my baby and babies don't keep!"*

ones—three under 17 months at one time and then four under four years. I longed to change the world and fulfill all the visions I dreamed of as I sat and nursed my baby. But I realized that these visions were for another time. I was doing the greatest work I could do as I nursed my baby and cared for my little ones. If you can nourish and train your little ones and keep the home to a basic standard, you are DOING A GREAT JOB! You don't have to add one more thing to your list of what to do in your day.

When you sit down to nurse the baby, that's often when you notice dirty windows and marks on the walls. Turn a blind eye to them. Your windows will still be dirty in the years to come, but you won't have these precious little ones at this age. They are more important than sparkling windows and flawless walls!

### Start Training Early!

Train your children to only eat at the table or at least in the kitchen or dining room. I do not allow anyone in our home, young children (or even teens or adults, because they are an example to the younger ones) to eat in any other room in the house. If you allow children to eat in the lounge, in their bedrooms or wherever they like, you create a lot more cleaning for yourself. It is slovenly, a bad habit for them to get into, and an inefficient waste of your valuable cleaning time.

Try to avoid foods with sugar or artificial colors—they will make your children hyper-active which will not help the order of the home. This means, of course, that

you must always read labels carefully as nearly every packaged and canned food you purchase has sugar and artificial colors in the ingredients. Study and learn to feed your children correctly.

Train your children to help with household chores, even if they can't do them to your standard. Young children can set the table, help cut vegetables, do dishes and sweep the floor, etc. And they love to do it. By the time your young daughters are teens, they should know how to run the home.

I would also encourage you to cut corners—not corners of cleanliness, but unnecessary tasks. I remember when I first started homemaking nearly 50 years ago; I kept to the traditions of that time. Every week, without fail, I changed all the bed sheets in the home. We used to take the bottom sheet off the bed and put it in the laundry, put the top sheet on the bottom and a new sheet on the top! But now we have fitted sheets and it doesn't work that way. Plus, I don't believe that we need to change sheets every week. I have digressed from that tradition. If the children bathe or shower, you can keep sheets on the beds for two or three weeks at a time. This saves a lot of laundry, especially if you have a number of children.

*The Crown of the home is Godliness.  
The Beauty of the home is Order.  
The Glory of the home is Hospitality.  
The Blessing of the home is Contentment.*

What about ironing? I also started out ironing about twice a week. I even ironed pillow cases (I had friends who ironed tea towels)! Help! How did I do that with four children under four and then six young children? I certainly don't do that now, even though my children have grown. I have better things to do. I try to hang up clothes from the dryer immediately so they don't crumple and iron only what is absolutely necessary. I will even throw a dress in the dryer to unwrinkle if it needs ironing!

Remember, you are responsible to keep your home clean and in order, but not to do unnecessary tasks. Make the use of this time to spend more time with your children, reading to them, teaching them and doing creative things with them. That will have far more impact than unnecessary household tasks.

### **Are your children older? You are entering the Queen stage!**

If you trained your children when they were young, they will now know how to clean and run the home. In fact, everyone in the home should feel their responsibility to keep it clean and tidy. You are now entering the reward time of having consistently and faithfully training your chil-

dren. You can enjoy living like a queen.



## **ROUTINE**

A routine keeps order in the home. In our home I expect everyone to be up in time for breakfast. We have our morning Family Devotions at 8.00 am. Anyone who has not finished their breakfast before this time misses out on breakfast. It is over. We have to clean up and get on with the day. We have lunch at a certain

time and supper at a certain time. I am aghast when I hear of mothers allowing their children, and especially their teens, to sleep in and get up whenever they want. This is poor training and does not prepare them for life. It does not prepare them for a career or how to get to work on time and does not prepare daughters to run a home. Children should learn to get up at a certain time. The day is for work and adventure, the night is for sleeping!<sup>(1)</sup>

Of course, children need their sleep, but if they cannot get up in the morning, they are obviously going to bed too late the night before. I am still old fashioned enough to believe in the old adage, "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise." However, in saying this, I don't believe in legality and rigidity either, and I allow everyone to sleep in on the weekends.

In the midst of keeping order, we must also have freedom; freedom to change our plans if something special is happening; to halt our schedule if someone needs help or arrives at our home and needs encouragement, or freedom to do something unexpected and different, just for the spice of life. A sense of order in the home gives permission to do fun things.



## **DISCIPLINE**

Order can only happen with discipline, first in our own lives and then teaching it to our children. We also must try to get to bed at a reasonable hour so we can get up early and be ready to face the day—to prepare breakfast, put in a load of laundry, organize schooling and each child to their various tasks.<sup>(2)</sup>

One of my best disciplines in regard to cleaning is my weekly *Preparation Day*. Every Friday we clean the whole house from top to bottom. Cleaning once a week keeps the home in good shape. I include everyone in the home in this task. I have a list of each task that needs to be accomplished in each room and someone is appointed to each task or tasks. This is the day, when apart from vacuuming and dusting, we give the bathrooms and toilets a full cleaning, clean the marks off the carpet, walls and doors and clean the windows and mirrors, etc. I also try to clean out a fridge or one of the cupboards. I don't clean all cupboards in one day, but try to do one a week on each *Preparation Day*.<sup>(3)</sup>



## **ENCOURAGE**

To keep a home running smoothly is easier said than done! Children lag behind. They disobey and complain. But they'll get tired of you nagging. Inspire and encourage your children instead. When you train your young children you may need to use some "carrots" to get them motivated. You will have your different ideas that work in your family. You may like to print up a schedule on the fridge. Each child who is up on time each morning gets a star. Each child who does their appointed task without complaining gets a star. The one who gets the most stars at the end of the week gets a prize—something worthwhile. This gives

them incentive and encouragement to do what is right and develop habit of doing it.



## RESIST

Resisting what? I'm talking about resisting the resistance that comes from your children and teens. They will naturally be lazy. They will muddle around instead of

out of control and disobedient! You don't even want to get up in the morning! To enjoy an orderly, fun-filled home you have to train your children to be obedient and respectful. Without this foundation, it's hard to have order.

No matter what it costs, determine to teach your children to be obedient. You don't do this by getting mad and angry. You make sure that they hear and understand what you have asked them to do and you quietly enforce your commands. If they disobey, or delay to obey, you discipline them according to the way God has outlined in His Word, not

*Drop Thy still dews of quietness,  
Till all our strivings cease;  
Take from our souls the strain and stress,  
And let our ordered lives confess  
The beauty of Thy peace.  
~John Greenleaf Whittier*

doing their chores. Don't give in! Keep to your plan. Establish the order until it is the habit in the home. Training doesn't happen in a day. It takes time, but it will become a habit if you are consistent and don't give in! (Isaiah 28:9-10).

Family life is meant to be filled with fun and joy. But let's face it, there's no fun parenting children who are unruly,

according to some humanistic idea.<sup>(4)</sup>

Instead of dreading to get out in the bed in the morning, you'll bounce out of bed! Never forget, you order the world of your home. You are in charge, you are not the victim!

**NANCY CAMPBELL**

### Footnotes:

(1) Proverbs 6:6-11; 13:4; 24:3-34 and 26:14.

(2) Diligence: Genesis 2:15; Exodus 23:12; Psalm 110:3; Proverbs 20:13; 27:23; 28:19; 31:13, 27; Ecclesiastes 5:2; 9:10; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Galatians 6:9-10; Colossians 3:17, 23 and Luke 16:10. Laziness: Proverbs 6:6-11; 10:4; 13:4; 14:23; 18:9; 19:15, 20:4; 23:21; 24:30-34; 26:14-15 and Ecclesiastes 10:18.

(3) If you would like to read more about cleaning on The Preparation Day, go to:

<http://bit.ly/PreparationDay> and <http://bit.ly/PreparationDayIdeas>

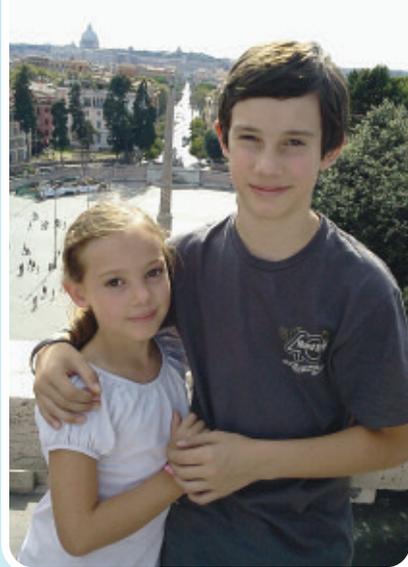
(4) Discipline: Proverbs 3:11-12; 10:1, 13; 13:24; 17:25; 19:18; 20:30; 22:15; 23:13-14; 26:3 and 29:15, 17.

## THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISION OF YOUR LIFE

**“Choose you this day whom you will serve; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”  
(Joshua 24:15).**

Have you made this most important choice in your life? So many marriages and homes are falling apart. It is only the lives and homes that are built on the foundation of Jesus Christ and His commandments that will stand. How can you get your life on a right foundation and receive God's salvation?

1. **ACKNOWLEDGE** that you are a sinner. It is your sin that separates you from fellowship with God. (Luke 18:13; Romans 3:21)
2. **REPENT** of your sin and turn away from it. (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38,39; 3:19)
3. **CONFESS** your sin to God and He will cleanse you and forgive you. His forgiveness is complete. When He forgives, He forgets! (Psalm 32:,2; 1 John 1:7,9; Romans 10:9,10)
4. **FORSAKE** your own way and determine to follow God's ways. (Isaiah 48:18; 55:7; Mark 8:24-38)
5. **BELIEVE** that Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is the Son of God. He is the One who has borne the punishment of your sin. (John 3:16; Mark 16:16)
6. **RECEIVE** His great salvation that He has purchased on your behalf. (John 1:12)
7. **BE BAPTIZED.** (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:38)
8. **THANK** Him for His great salvation and His blood that He shed for you. Receive Him gladly and ask Him to take control of your life.
9. **DETERMINE** that you and your household will all serve the Lord.



# The Wrong Diagnosis

It is not an uncommon thing for mothers to be told that the baby growing in their womb may have Down syndrome or some abnormality. In the majority of cases they are encouraged to abort the baby. Many times the diagnosis is incorrect and babies are born perfectly. The following are some of the testimonies from mothers who would not abort their precious babies. What about the mothers who give into the pressure from medical staff to abort? How many babies are aborted that should have been born without any problems? And even if the baby was not “perfect,” shouldn’t every life be protected at all costs? God’s kingdom is a kingdom of life. If we belong to His kingdom, we will choose life in every situation, no matter what the diagnosis.

## My Prayer Warriors

My beautiful daughter, Rebecca, had so many things wrong with her while in my womb that they came to the conclusion she had Down syndrome, which they often suspect when there are three or more serious problems. We refused the amniocentesis test—we would not have aborted anyway, no matter what the result.

I had recently converted to Jesus Christ and found some wonderful prayer warriors to pray for her. They taught me how to fight and pray. As a mother bear defends her little ones, I defended my baby with the Living Word which has power to thwart the plans of the enemy.

Rebecca was born perfect. My prayer warriors came in to the hospital singing the Lord’s praises. The enemy tried to take her again at 10 days old but once again we had victory over his pathetic attempt to trip up God’s plan for her. She is eight years now and loves God so much. She plays the cello in a youth orchestra and electric bass in church. She wrote me a beautiful note recently saying, “I love Jesus more than you, because He made me to love you.” I thank the Lord because He is so loving and faithful and for sending me prayer warriors to pray with me.

### ELISABETH ANDERSON

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*Paola and Elisabeth with Alex (11) and Rebecca (8).*



band explained that we had been trying for over a year and thought I may be infertile again. The test was positive! The doctors actually discouraged my husband from telling me right away, (which he ignored) and told us to expect a miscarriage. They informed us that because of the seizures and the medicine, that if I did not miscarry, the baby would not be normal and we should consider “termination.”

We prayed a lot, and then some more. The doctors told us I would likely keep having seizures but I haven’t had one since and my daughter is

nine years old! God is amazing—she was born perfectly healthy. I’m so thankful we didn’t even consider terminating.

Twelve months later we happily learned I was pregnant with child number three. During the routine ultrasound they suspected Down syndrome due to the baby’s measurements. The OB wanted to follow up with amniocentesis in case we may consider “termination.” I refused and assured her that if God gave us a baby with Down syndrome we would still want him or her! We received pressure from not only the doctors, but also the technicians. We had two high-level ultrasounds to try to rule Down syndrome out, but they didn’t. They were so convinced that at delivery they had a neonatal surgical team waiting (in case of heart issues). My little McKenna

## Infertile! And Four Babies!

When we were told 12 years ago that we were infertile, “devastated” could not even describe our emotions. They were sure that even In Vitro Fertilization would not help. We sought the Lord as we waited for my cycle to start for one of their tests. It never came! Unknowingly, I was already pregnant with our firstborn son who is now 11 years old.

With our firstborn daughter, I suffered three grand mal seizures and went to the Emergency. The ER doctors gave me medicine to stop the seizures and asked my husband if I could be pregnant. My hus-

was born perfectly healthy and is seven years old today.

Baby number four was born with a club foot, which we knew about from the ultrasound. I spent three months researching, interviewing doctors and preparing for the medical journey. We chose a method called Ponsetti that was labor intensive for the parents, slower than doing a few surgeries but the long term outcome would be much better. Our baby had his foot casted at three days old and kept it on for three months. He then slept in a bar attached to

shoes for three and a half years. Today, Brenner is our exuberant, active, athletic child with virtually no signs of the deformity and no surgeries! We give God the glory for our four children who are all healthy.

I'd love to ask that first doctor about the infertility diagnosis!

#### MICHELLE LANDRY

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*Michelle and Chris's children are Braden (11), Morgan (9), McKenna (7) and Brenner (4).*



## Finally Living my Dream



All I ever wanted to do my whole life was be a mother and homemaker. God had other plans for me at first, though. I was 32 when I married and we began trying to conceive right away. Soon after our wedding, I found I was eaten up with endometriosis. I had surgery, lost my right ovary, my appendix, but hoped my left ovary would work after they removed the many cysts. One and one-half years later endometriosis came back, this time in my left ovary. After three months of Depo-Lupron, it finally disappeared. I still did not think I could conceive, but after going through foster parenting classes, hoping to foster-to-adopt an infant, we became pregnant!

I gave birth to my first daughter at the age of 37, and yes, they offered genetic counseling for me to make sure all was okay. I declined, and my daughter was born perfect. My second baby came at age 39, but I spent most of the pregnancy going to a midwife, so the subject of genetic counseling never came up.

At 41 years, I became pregnant with our third child and visited my midwife at 12 weeks. Unfortunately, they found no heartbeat, and later that week, I miscarried. It appeared the baby was only nine weeks in size (per a sonogram), so we

believe that baby had already been deceased for three weeks. I was devastated, but had my two children, so I felt blessed.

At the age of 43 years, I found out I was pregnant once again! This time, I went straight to an OB/GYN. My progesterone was very low, so I was put on synthetic progesterone, and the pregnancy went fine! Once again, they offered genetic counseling. We completed paperwork, a nice lady counseled us and they did blood work.

I did end up having amniocentesis three weeks before my due date, only because I had polyhydramnios (too much amniotic fluid) and my daughter was swimming around too freely. My doctor was afraid my water would break and the cord would come out first, cutting off her oxygen supply, so for this pregnancy only, I agreed to a c-section. The amnio was to make sure her lungs were developed enough, but at nearly three weeks early, her lungs were perfectly developed and she was 8 lbs. 9 ozs.

I consider all my children (even the "one that got away") miracles! I always wondered why God allowed me to wait so long to have the life I always wanted. I believe it is to be a testimony to those who have no hope! There IS hope! I am proof of it! I am 48 years old and finally living my dream life: I am a stay-at-home-homeschooling mom! God is so good! He makes the barren woman abide in the house as a joyful mother of children (Psalm 113:9).

#### CAROLYN WITHROW

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*Ken and Carolyn with their children, Alix (11), Moira (9) and Dara (4).*

## The Wrong Date

Growing up, I was told that because I have cystic fibrosis, I probably wouldn't be able to have biological children and I definitely shouldn't even if I could! When my husband and I married, we dearly wanted children and visited a specialist who told me that because I had infrequent, anovulatory cycles, I would not be able to become pregnant without intervention. We went home saddened, but determined that our lives were in God's hands.

Seven months later, though my cycles remained irregular, I discovered I was pregnant. It was more wonderful than I had imagined it would be. God granted my body strength and stability and blessed me with a first trimester free from nausea. When I was supposedly 20 weeks, I went for my first ultrasound. The doctor was annoyed with our enthusiasm and when the ultrasound was completed, he announced that our child definitely had intra-uterine growth retardation (IUGR), most likely had Down syndrome and he wasn't sure what other problems!

"You should consider not going through with this pregnancy," he said matter-of-factly. Perhaps it was having grown up around medical professionals, or maybe it was the maternal hormones swirling through my body, but I was not intimidated. Neither was John.

"Termination is not an option for us. God gave us this pregnancy. We were never supposed to be able to conceive. We don't care if this child turns out to be a frog. We will keep it, love it and care for it!" we replied emphatically. We left and never returned to that hospital. All through the rest of my pregnancy, we had peace. Neither one of us believed the diagnosis to be true, but believed this child was God's and we were prepared for health, infirmity or disability.

We had numerous due dates assigned ranging from early March to late April. At 46.5 weeks (according to that first ultra-

sound due date) labor began. I gave birth at home with our midwife on April 24, 2002 to a lovely little rosy girl who was obviously completely “normal” and had grown well—7 lbs. 14 oz. of delightful, miraculous, answer to prayer. She was clearly not “overdue” at all. It was then that my husband, John, and I discovered what had transpired that caused the doctor to believe there was something amiss. I had had a cycle at the end of May and everyone took this to determine the date of conception, but because of my cycles, I, in fact, did not conceive until probably the end of July.

Consequently, my due date was set approximately six weeks too early. When the ultrasound was performed, of course, she appeared small. If the doctor had taken a little time, he would have discovered that my blood work and images all lined up for a healthy, much younger baby.

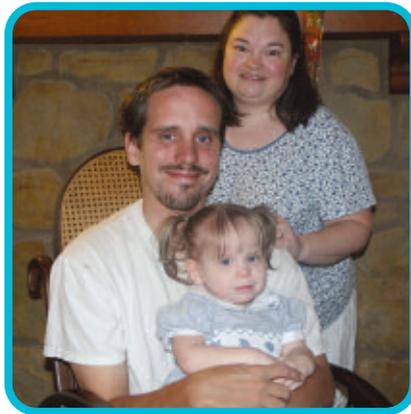
My husband and I are very thankful we had God’s strength and teaching to resist the devil at that crucial moment. But, we grow more thankful every year as we have not been blessed with another pregnancy.

Our daughter is still one of the healthiest children we know! And she is the delight of our lives.

#### HOLLY LOUGHLIN

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*John and Holly’s Murren is now 9.5 years.*



At my first physical exam for my pregnancy, the nurse told me she had “never felt anything like that before.” She put me on bed rest at 10 weeks gestation and ordered an emergency ultrasound. The ultrasound was “normal” but they recommended a triple screen due to my being 34 years old. I agreed because it was only a blood draw and I thought that if anything was wrong, I’d like the time to adjust to the idea of not having my “perfect” baby.

After talking further to the doctor that examined me, he explained that I had a fibroid in my uterus with the baby. I was so relieved!

Soon after, while driving home from the market, I received a phone call from the hospital where I had the ultrasound. Uncharacteristically, I answered it while I drove. The person on the line said, “We have your blood test results back and I’m

## I’m Glad we Didn’t Listen

sorry to tell you that they are positive for abnormalities.” She wanted me to schedule a CVS or amniocentesis. I explained that we didn’t want further testing, that we would love our baby no matter what and didn’t need to know ahead of time. She became really indignant and yelled at me through the phone, “Do you realize that your baby has # in # chances of having Down syndrome?” I’m sorry that I don’t remember the exact numbers anymore. Mind you, I was driving in city traffic!

Eventually our daughter was born. Although she had some minor health struggles, she was healthy—no Down syndrome. I’m glad I didn’t allow them to put her at risk doing a CVS or amnio. I’m thankful that the God who created the whole universe was knitting my daughter in my womb exactly as He wanted her and that none of these things were either mysterious or unknown to Him. He needed no tests or tools. She and I were in His trustworthy hands.

#### HEATHER ARPINO

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*Mike and Heather with little Adelaide (2).*

## Why give in to Worry?

When I became pregnant with our first baby, my doctor advised me to have a routine blood test in order to test for abnormalities. I declined, and received the “guilt trip” talk about caring for a child with disabilities. A few weeks later I experienced a threatened miscarriage. The same doctor sent me home telling me unsympathetically to await the natural termination of my pregnancy which was likely to be unviable. We went on to deliver a perfectly healthy baby girl.

I was offered the blood test again when I became pregnant with our second child, which I also declined. He was born with a pilonidal dimple on the base of his spine, which is an indicator of Spina Bifida Occulta (a type of Spina Bifida where the split in the vertebrae is so small the spinal

cord does not protrude.) It is a hereditary condition, which we knew was on my side of the family, but had not, until this point, thought about it affecting our children.

All of our seven children are affected to a degree, with two of them having the pilonidal dimple and the others having a very mild indent. Not one of them has any difficulties from it. Thankfully I refused the blood tests as it is likely it would have shown up which would have caused so much unnecessary worry!

#### LORNA DAY

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*Michael and Lorna’s children are Rachel (13), Jared (12), Tessa (9), Aleysha (6), Sophie (5), Kane (2) and Troy (10 months).*

## Jealously Guard God’s Gift

When I was pregnant with our second son the doctors told us that he had a problem with his heart. They then sent us to a medical office for genetic counseling. I went through many weeks of crying and worry thinking about what they might find. When my husband and I met with the genetics counselor she told me that “most” children with this heart issue are either born with Down syndrome or another of three or four trisomy disorders. She never talked about abortion but she did make it clear that babies with these disorders don’t live long.

After we met with this counselor they called us into the room for our 3-D ultrasound. The lady was really talkative, showing us all the parts of our wonderful gift



from God. Finally, the technician left and told us the doctor would be in shortly. He took forever to come back but when he came in the door the first thing he said to us was, "Congratulations, you have a perfectly healthy baby. The spot on the heart is a calcium deposit and is harmless." Our baby was born June 27th 2011 and his heart is perfectly healthy.

In the weeks I waited for my ultrasound I wrote these words, "God I trust

in you. You know how much I want to hold this baby in my arms, alive and healthy, to spend many years with him, to see him grow in your Word and serve you. If this is a test, give me strength to pass it. Give me strength to confront what comes our way. I know you have his life planned and you know what you are doing. Thank you for the opportunity to carry him within me, to feel him move and know the awesomeness of my God and Creator. How someone could not understand that this little life is a miracle and gift from you is beyond my imagination. I will protect and guard his life jealously in your name. He is your gift to me. Thank you, Father."

### CHRISTINA HERNANDEZ

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*Chris Tina and Joel have two boys, Jesse (2) and Ezra (5 months).*

Three years passed before we once again received the news that our family circle was going to become a little larger. This time we knew the routine. I waited until 13 weeks and once again underwent the surgery that would enable my cervix to stay closed and give our baby plenty of time to develop. We breathed a sigh of relief with that behind us. It was very short-lived. After doing some routine blood testing, we were called to the doctor's office and told by the midwife that the blood work showed I was carrying a very high risk of this baby having Down syndrome.

She encouraged us to have an amniocentesis performed. We declined and said we did not want an already high-risk pregnancy to have any more risks associated with it. She proceeded to tell us we could abort the baby since we were well within the time frame. We told her very emphatically that abortion was not an option for us. She was not pleased, but accepted our decision. Everything progressed well until about seven months. Having the surgery on my cervix, they are attuned to any signs of contractions since the stitching would need to be removed if contractions began.

During my visit, I told the midwife that I was having back pain. They immediately wanted to check if I was starting contractions and sent me to the hospital for a non-stress test. Thankfully, it showed I was not having contractions, but to everyone's consternation, it showed our baby's heart was skipping beats. In fact, it skipped 12 times within 30 minutes and sent those attending us into a frenzy. After doing blood work to see if my heart was being attacked by some unknown source, and having the test come back negative, they decided I should see the maternal-fetal medicine specialist for a level three sonogram. They warned us that if they found our baby in distress they would immediately deliver him.

As we waited in the office for our name to be called, we were filled with fear and dread. Yet, we knew that we and our little one were being sheltered in His loving arms. As we went in for our appointment, the nurse looked at us and said, "You know that this probably confirms that this baby has Down syndrome since they always have heart problems too." We again stated that abortion was not an option and whether this baby was perfect by the world's standard or not, he was perfect according to God's. During the two hour sonogram we learned

## Heart Beating Perfectly!

My husband and I were married on June 9, 1990 and I became pregnant three years later. We were overjoyed! The pregnancy was uneventful until the fourth month. As I was talking on the phone with a friend, all of a sudden, I was drenched in fluid. I quickly got off of the phone and called my husband who was in another part of the house. Upon arriving at the doctor's, we found that the umbilical cord was prolapsed. The doctor looked at us and said, "There is nothing that we can do for this baby. You will need to deliver."

We were sent to the labor and delivery unit of the local hospital where labor was induced. Before much time had passed, our son was born. We knew that before he was ever laid in our arms, he was already being comforted in the arms of the Savior. Our hearts were broken. The grief seemed almost unbearable.

At that time, the doctors diagnosed me with an incompetent cervix, and said that when I became pregnant again they would need to stitch my cervix closed so I could carry to full term. Then we began our long wait.

It was another three years before we heard the joyful news that we were once again expecting. This time we entered with joy, but also fear and trepidation. Would

we make it through this one? It seemed like an unreal possibility as early in the pregnancy, I started to hemorrhage. Upon calling the doctor, we found that nothing could be done—either the bleeding would stop on its own, or we would lose this baby too.

All weekend I lay on the couch praying the bleeding would stop and we would be able to keep this baby. On Monday morning, the doctor wanted to see me. By that time, the bleeding has slowed down considerably. He checked me and said that everything seemed fine and the baby had a good, strong heartbeat. He could give us no reason for the bleeding, but we were glad it seemed to be resolving itself. The doctor performed the necessary surgery at 13 weeks, and on December 21, 1996 our Christmas present arrived a few days early. Emily Lauren was the fulfillment of all our hopes and dreams.



we were carrying a boy.

They could see his tiny heart skipping, but could not determine a reason since everything seemed to be developing fine. We left the office rejoicing that our baby was given more time to develop. We were warned that if the skipping of his heart intensified, then he would be thrown into congestive heart failure.

Finally on September 3, 1999, our waiting came to an end. After only 51 minutes of labor, Eric Joseph made his appearance into the world. As the pediatrician did his initial check over, the nurse attending me said, "Sharon, his heart is beating perfectly." We were thrilled with God's gift. Despite the dire predictions of the doctors our son was born healthy and he has never had an issue with his heart since. We don't know what transpired during that pregnancy, but we are assured that our son came into the world experiencing the healing hand of our wonderful Creator.

#### SHARON BOSLEY

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*John and Sharon's children are Emily (14) and Eric (12) and our firstborn in heaven.*



## Praise God for Pro Life Doctor

While expecting our third baby in 1995, I had an Alpha-fetal blood test done and the results showed much higher risk for Down syndrome than expected. I was certainly troubled and sought Christian counsel and prayer. The doctor said, "We can run the test again but only in this short time in your pregnancy. If you knew the baby had Down syndrome, would you do anything about it?" He could not even bring himself to say the word abortion and he knew I was not considering it.

"No, I would not do anything about

it," I told him. Following the second test, the results were somewhat improved, but still high, so the doctor did an extra-detailed sonogram with his expert sinologist. This expert measured and took photos and said things like, "The brain size is correct and the heart's four chambers are functioning nicely. And I can see there's no cleft palate!" She saw so many normal things but could not declare it did not have Down syndrome.

The labor was especially difficult and I was thankful to finally hold this child in my arms. Audrey has been a source of joy for me and has had no sign of any neuro-spinal problems or Down syndrome. I was thankful especially for a pro-life husband, a pro-life doctor and the doctor's pro-life staff! I refused the test with my fourth child and delivered a boy after three girls!

#### MARY ANN AVERY

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*Ken and Mary Ann's children are Anna (21), Emma (18), Audrey (15), and Andrew (13).*

# Spina Bifida Blessing

We brought Ariana Dominique home to live with us on July 28, 2005. We are very grateful the biological mother did not abort her baby, even though she knew she was having a baby with Spina Bifida. At only 15 days, Ariana was skinny and very quiet. She had failed to thrive in the NICU at the hospital, barely taking any formula during her feedings. Immediately upon arriving home, we pulled her from the car seat and almost never put her down. From the first feeding she ate with a robust appetite and in no time at all was a beautiful, plump baby doll!

Ariana was born with Spina Bifida and bilateral club feet. Both legs were casted when we brought her home in order to shape and form her very deformed legs. She virtually had no feet, only toes at the end of her misshapen legs. In the first year, she had many castings, braces, and one surgery that resulted in normal legs and fairly normal feet. She was an absolute trooper through it all. In fact, during her six years of life so far, she has taught me the true meaning of courage and strength.

The Lord has blessed Ariana with a

contented, peaceful disposition that makes her a joy to raise. Her first name, Ariana means "sweet melody" and Dominique means "belonging to God," and she fits that description perfectly. She brings out the best in the people around her and even in strangers. When I am in town running errands people often come up to me to ask about Ariana. She approaches life with such sweetness and joy that it naturally attracts people to her. They often ask if they can buy her a cookie or give her some token they have with them.



One day a man came up to me and wanted to know what was wrong with my daughter. I told him about her Spina Bifida and he was awed by her vivacity and the fact that she did not feel sorry for herself. He then proceeded to tell me that he was diagnosed with cancer that very day and was sitting at the coffee shop feeling sorry for himself. He told me that seeing Ariana and meeting her changed everything for him!

Ariana has been greatly blessed by our Lord. She wears braces which enable her to walk quite well. This past summer we enjoyed a vacation up in Sequoia country. We went to a meadow where the only place you could walk was on the fallen logs. Ariana walked on all the logs! She rides a scooter, a bike and even horses! She loves the Lord and is great at memorizing Scripture.

Ariana is an amazing and beautiful person that God created for His glory. Her life brings Him glory every day. Many peo-

*continued on page 26*



Smiling Marianne Manley pouring a yummy Kefir Smoothie.

# Kefir

## A Way to Nourish your Family

### How to Make Kefir (2 cups)

2 cups fresh whole homogenized milk (rBST or rBGH free is preferred), non-homogenized milk, goat's milk, raw milk or raw colostrum (raw cow's or goat's milk is the best!)

2-3 Tablespoons kefir grains  
clean quart size glass jar with a lid  
plastic strainer (use plastic as the acid can react with metal)  
plastic bowl

Put the kefir curds in the glass quart jar and fill with milk, making sure to leave an inch of head room at the top of the jar. Shake the jar a few times to mix the milk with the curds. Place the jar on the kitchen counter for 24 hours in the winter and 12 hours in the summer, or until the milk gels and whey starts to form on the bottom of the jar. (Do not worry if there is complete separation of the whey, the kefir is still fine to use.) Place the kefir in the refrigerator when it is finished fermenting. The fermenting still continues in the refrigerator, but is slowed down. You can now drink the kefir you strained.

To begin another batch, place a plastic strainer in a plastic bowl. Pour the contents of "already made" kefir through the strainer. Tap the strainer against the sides of the bowl repeatedly until only the curds are left in the strainer. Use these curds to make another batch.

### Kefir Fruit Smoothie

2 cups strained kefir

Frozen banana (broken into 3 pieces)

Frozen fruit (strawberries, mangoes, blueberries, pitted cherries, pineapple, etc.) I use eight strawberries.

Place the fruit with kefir into the blender and blend, starting at a slow speed and then accelerate to the desired consistency. Pour into glasses and top with a straw. Makes two cups.

Variations:

Add lemon flavored cod liver oil such as Carlson's, add peanut or almond butter, a little cream, sour cream or buttermilk. Have fun with it. Enjoy! You may notice that you have a feeling of radiant health.

"Honey, would you please make me a smoothie?"

Each day my husband begs me to make him a kefir smoothie. Kefir is a refreshing, slightly tart and effervescent cultured dairy beverage. When mixed with frozen fruit, it becomes a delicious ice cream like shake (with no other sweetener than the fruit).

### Easily Tolerated

Kefir is a cousin to yogurt, but is much easier to make because the milk does not have to be heated. However, since the micro-organisms in kefir remove most of the lactose from the milk, it is usually well tolerated even by people who are lactose intolerant. It is very economical. Once you obtain some grains, you can keep them alive and producing more kefir indefinitely.

The kefir curds are called grains. Some kefir grains are similar in appearance to large curd cottage cheese and are white or slightly yellow. The history of kefir goes back more than 2,000 years. It is thought that kefir originated in the Caucasus Mountains of Europe where many people live well past 100 years.

The word "kefir" is thought to be derived from the Turkish word "Keif" meaning "good feeling," probably as a result of well-being experienced after drinking it.

### A Health Tonic

Kefir is a great source of calcium and probiotics. It restores flora in the intestines. If you have problem in this area you will notice a great improvement after drinking kefir regularly for a few months. It strengthens the immune system, prevents stomach ulcers and is a natural antibiotic. It is a complete protein and contains all the essential amino acids, which are critical for healing. Kefir is an abundant source of usable calcium, magnesium, and phosphorus.

Do you need any more convincing? Kefir is also a rich source of Vitamin B12 which is important for good health and longevity; the calcium in the kefir aids the absorption of B12. It contains B1 which is important to mental attitude and the nervous system. Thiamine

## Other Uses for Kefir

You can use kefir in making Ice Cream by replacing the milk (place 1 cup kefir, 1 cup cream and 1/4 sugar) in the Ice Cream maker.

Use kefir in cooking to make pancakes, waffles, biscuits, breads and as a base for salad dressings.

Use a little kefir on the face or anywhere on the skin. Fermented milks contain lactic acid which is naturally occurring Alpha hydroxy acid (AHA).

Use a teaspoon of kefir smoothed under the arms for deodorant (the kefir bacteria eats the body odor bacteria).

capacity, healthy muscles, organs and liver, as well as digestion and appetite.

Kefir is good for the skin, gives sweeter breath, helps bowel movements and reduces stomach acid and flatulence. It stabilizes the appetite and helps you lose weight.

My husband and I drink a smoothie daily and have no aches or pains and are rarely sick. I have taught many friends and also clients (I am a home-birth midwife in San Diego) how to make kefir so they can enjoy healthy pregnancies.

If you would like to order some kefir grains, or watch a YouTube video on how to make kefir, you can go to my website [www.kefirlive.com](http://www.kefirlive.com).

### MARIANNE MANLEY

San Diego, California, USA

[marianne@sbcbglobal.net](mailto:marianne@sbcbglobal.net)

*Chuck and Marianne's children are:*

*Alexandra (22) married to Bryan Distin, Luke (16), and Grace (14). Marianne has attended 15 Above Rubies retreats in San Diego!*

# I couldn't let him go!

On the 19th of October, 1999, it was confirmed I was pregnant. I was so happy I couldn't stop crying. I was already beginning to show by Christmas and feeling butterfly kicks. While in the hospital on Christmas Day for observation with kidney stones I heard his heartbeat for the first time.

I love being a mum and I love being pregnant. I treasure every experience, movement and the special time I spend with my baby before he is born. On the 15th of February, 2000 my mum and older son, Damian joined me to see the first ultrasound. We laughed and joked as the two radiologists tried to tell me I was having a boy without letting Damian know. All of a sudden the two radiologists went quiet and one ran out of the room.

I immediately sensed something was wrong. She came back with a doctor and suddenly the room was full of people. I began to panic and cry. What was wrong with my baby? You never feel as alone as when you are given a diagnosis that changes your life and your family forever. The doctor told me my baby had a complete AV Canal, which was so bad they expected I would miscarry within the next two weeks. They then pointed out six soft markers—his heart condition, sandal gap, extra amniotic fluid in the womb, thickness around his neck/shoulders, his little finger which was clinodactyl and the shortness of his limbs—all indicating he may have Down syndrome. They recommended I should abort my baby and gave me a paper with a date and time for the termination. I threw it in the bin as we walked out the door.

I chose to call my son Joshua Elliot meaning "to be saved by God" and "The Lord is God" which I thought summed up what Joshua needed most in his life.

We were also referred to the Mater where they intended to do an amniocentesis and a more complete ultra sound with a cardiologist. I refused the amniocentesis due to the risk of miscarrying and told them it made no difference to me if he was Down syndrome or not. Down syndrome isn't about saving a life; it's about taking away a life deemed less than perfect.

The cardiologist told me Josh's aorta



was closed. He expected I should be able to carry him through the pregnancy as my heart was keeping him alive, but when he was born I would probably lose him. He said if he didn't die, they would have to operate immediately and they may be able to save him.

The hospital referred me to a genetic counselor because I refused the amniocentesis. She was full of information but it was all about what could go wrong. The options were not for his well-being, but to decide if I should keep him or not. The general consensus was that he would be better off not being born! She did reassure me it wasn't my fault, and this was something I needed.

I quit work and tried to stay positive and not worry. What should have been a special time became a poignant time. I still treasured every kick and all the special moments, but it was tinged with sadness and fear. Every time he kicked it made me smile and cry—smile because I loved him so much and he was moving around, but sadness because I didn't know for how long he would kick. I looked forward to his being born so I could hold him, but I didn't want to give birth because he might not live once he was born. I cried myself to sleep so many times. Nobody understood why I went ahead with the pregnancy. I

couldn't make my family understand. But the simple fact was—HE WAS MY SON and I believed he was a child of God and God would decide his life, not me.

The 20th of May came around and at a soccer match for my son I was cheering when I felt enormous pain in my belly. I blamed the kidney stones (which kept re-occurring throughout the pregnancy) and continued on through the day, gardening, building a gate, doing housework and playing with Damian. After dinner we played a board game and went to bed. I lay in bed thinking that if my waters broke I would electrocute myself on an electric blanket? I rolled over to disconnect the power point, rolled back and bang, my waters broke. What timing! While I stripped the bed, put on the laundry and remade the bed, I called around to find someone to take me to the hospital and called the hospital to let them know I was coming.

I was unable to have any drugs due to his heart condition and had to wear two belts around my stomach all night to monitor my contractions and his heartbeat. I was such a mix of emotions; excitement at soon having my son and fear that he may die.

At 1.53 am, 21st May 2000, Joshua was born, six weeks early and 4 lbs. 12 oz. But there was silence. He didn't cry, he was oh so still and an awful color. I was beginning to panic when we heard a tiny cry, like a mouse. I quickly cuddled him before they rushed him off to intensive care.

The next day they did the chromosomal test. Two weeks later the tests came

back confirming Down syndrome, Trisomy 21. They also did a cardiograph and the usual heel prick. Both of these tests showed abnormalities. When Josh was born, no one said, "How beautiful," "What a gorgeous baby," or "Isn't he adorable?" Just statistics and gloom! His birth was more a teaching experience for the doctors than a special moment in history.

It was hard to be in the maternity ward, surrounded by happy parents hugging their children and all their flowers and presents. No-one came near me, no flowers and no cards. When people did say anything they said how sorry they were. Everyone seemed to be in mourning! I tried to breastfeed but he was too weak. I went home on the night of the 23rd and had to leave Joshua in the hospital. This was very, very hard. I felt like I was leaving half my heart behind. It was so difficult walking away with empty arms.

At 1 am, the 24th of May, I received a phone call from the hospital. They had a helicopter on the way from Brisbane, but they didn't think Josh would make it. I rushed up to the hospital to see him lying there with tubes coming out everywhere and his tummy as big as a basket ball. His bowel wasn't working and the pressure had put him into heart failure. Due to bad weather the helicopter turned back and we had to wait for an ambulance.

We followed the ambulance from the hospital. Damian was in a car with my mum, and I was in my dad's car. When the ambulance took Joshua, it turned towards

Brisbane and my elder son was driven away to my mum's home in the opposite direction. I felt like I was being torn apart. Damian and I had never been apart before.

Over the next six months, Joshua spent most of his life in hospital, hanging onto life by a thread. Over and over the doctors wanted me to switch off his machines. My family told me to let him go. Everyone, EVERYONE told me to let him go. But I refused. I couldn't let go. And every day he amazed everyone by living. After four surgeries he eventually came home.

Joshua is now 11 years and I am blessed to homeschool him. He is the light of my life even though he has multiple disabilities and health concerns. Together we go into schools and teach students about disabilities. Two years ago a film was made about his life to teach more people about disabilities and break down barriers and stereotypes.

Joshua's heart and lungs are degenerating, and every year it is a struggle for him to live through winter, but each year he does. God has amazing plans for my little boy and I am so excited to see what they are! Who are we to deny God's plans?

#### TONI MITCHELL

Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia  
tmlitchell@westnet.com.au  
www.worldsapartdoco.com

*Jemma (home in heaven), Damian (20) and Joshua (11). Toni's husband left her after she conceived Joshua and they have been on their own ever since.*

*continued from page 23*

ple who learn they are having a child with Spina Bifida abort them. They have doomed themselves to an existence devoid of the joy that their child would have brought them. My life and my family's life, is richer and more meaningful because Ariana is part of it. Thank you, Jesus, for giving to us your very special gift—Ariana Dominique.

#### SUSAN MADRID

Aguanga, California, USA  
madcases@gmail.com

*Ed and Susan Madrid's children are Mande and Brian, Christen (22), Stephanie (17), Caleb (8), Ariana (6) and Rachel-Anne (3).*

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# ABOVE RUBIES RETREATS FOR 2012

Check [www.aboverubies.org](http://www.aboverubies.org) for additional retreats or changes.

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LADIES RETREAT, Rosemary Heights Retreat Centre  
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<http://www.rosemaryheights.com>  
Contact: Michelle Kauenhofen • Ph: 204 388 6015, 204 355 7682  
Email: [ceducate@explornet.ca](mailto:ceducate@explornet.ca)

## 10 – 12 FEBRUARY, WASHINGTON

LADIES RETREAT, Black Lake Bible Camp, Olympia  
Contact Nicole Stol with questions concerning registration.  
Ph: 253 655 4717 • [arblessings@gmail.com](mailto:arblessings@gmail.com) • [www.aboverubiesretreats.com](http://www.aboverubiesretreats.com)  
Or other questions: Heather Bryant  
Ph: 360 271 9668 • [hbbry91@msn.com](mailto:hbbry91@msn.com)

## 2 – 18 MARCH, UNITED KINGDOM AND EUROPE

Colin & Nancy will be ministering. For all details contact:  
Alice Gurr at [info@aboverubies.co.uk](mailto:info@aboverubies.co.uk) • (020) 8224 3628

## 31 MARCH – 1 APRIL, WISCONSIN

14th ANNUAL FAMILY RETREAT at Inspiration Center, Williams Bay  
Contact Roger and Jackie Thelen  
Ph: 262 723 6557 • [safehaven@pensys.com](mailto:safehaven@pensys.com)

## 13 – 15 APRIL, TEXAS

Contact: Jeanette Watje • Ph: 830 608 0880 Email:  
[Retreat2011@TexasRubies.com](mailto:Retreat2011@TexasRubies.com) • [www.TexasRubies.com](http://www.TexasRubies.com)

## 4 – 6 MAY, NORTH CAROLINA

LADIES RETREAT at Three Trees Retreat Center,  
North Cove area of Marion (about 5 miles from Blue Ridge Parkway).  
Contact: Donna Peck, Ph: 828 756 4859 • [peckd2007@yahoo.com](mailto:peckd2007@yahoo.com)  
Or Charissa Gibson, Ph: 828 756 7098 • [abide@inthevine.net](mailto:abide@inthevine.net)

## 1 – 3 JUNE, LOUISIANA

FAMILY RETREAT at Rocky Creek Conference Center, Pineville  
Contact: Angela Decoteau • Ph: 225 715 1587 • [calmdec@cox.net](mailto:calmdec@cox.net)

## 8 – 10 JUNE, ONTARIO, CANADA

FAMILY CAMP at Torrance (near Gravenhurst)  
Contact: Alison Morrison • [labaddc@hotmail.com](mailto:labaddc@hotmail.com) • 705 458 9631

## 10 – 12 AUGUST, WASHINGTON

LADIES RETREAT at Camp Brotherhood, Mount Vernon  
24880 Brotherhood Rd, Mount Vernon, WA 98274  
[www.campbrotherhood.org](http://www.campbrotherhood.org) • Ph: Pat Slater: 360 420 1468  
Contact: Meighan Graham • Email: [skagitvalleyrubies@gmail.com](mailto:skagitvalleyrubies@gmail.com)  
Ph: 206 351 2942 or 206 909 3534

## 17 – 19 AUGUST, COLORADO

LADIES RETREAT at Jellystone Park, Larkspur, CO  
Families are welcome! Fathers can enjoy time with their children at this amazing park.  
Contact: Felicia Johnson: [felipsha@gmail.com](mailto:felipsha@gmail.com) • Ph: 719 478 2113  
Or Sarah Rigby: [lovethatmkface@yahoo.com](mailto:lovethatmkface@yahoo.com) • Ph: 719 683 4067  
Facebook: Colorado Rubies

## 24 - 26 AUGUST, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

FAMILY and LADIES RETREAT at Pine Valley Bible Conference Center  
(45 min. east of San Diego)  
Contact: Gary and Trish Evans, Ph: 951 681 4858 or Cell: 951 315 9078  
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Email: [ceducate@explornet.ca](mailto:ceducate@explornet.ca)

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Contact: Becky Gustafson • [windycityrubies@gmail.com](mailto:windycityrubies@gmail.com) • 715 922 0922  
Or Denice Gustafson • [gusfamily7@gmail.com](mailto:gusfamily7@gmail.com)  
[www.windycityrubies.blogspot.com](http://www.windycityrubies.blogspot.com)

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Contact: Pam Rinas • [kprinas@gmail.com](mailto:kprinas@gmail.com) • Ph: 425 737 2068  
Or Melissa Brown • [melissalahtribrown@gmail.com](mailto:melissalahtribrown@gmail.com) • Ph: 731 330 6858

## 12 – 14 OCTOBER, SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA

1ST ANNUAL LADIES RETREAT, Cedar Lodge, Dundurn, SK  
Contact: Michelle Kauenhofen • Ph: 204 388 6015, 204 355 7682  
Email: [ceducate@explornet.ca](mailto:ceducate@explornet.ca)

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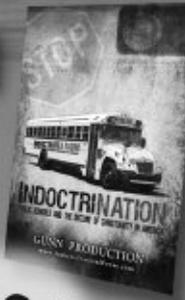
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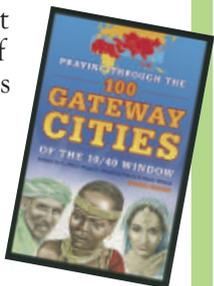
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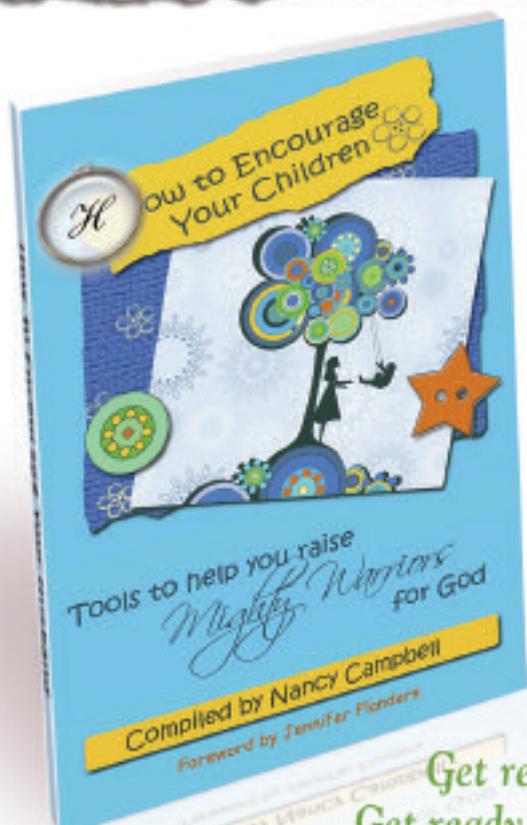
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